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RETALIATORY MOVE BEING MENTIONED

Shultz Aide Says It Depends on Identifying Attackers

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LISBON, Dec. 12 — A senior American official said today that if an investigation proved that a pro-Iranian group was responsible for the bombing of the United States Embassy in Kuwait this morning, the United States would probably consider retaliation, perhaps in coordination with France.

The official, traveling with Secretary of State George P. Shultz, said the United States was aware that the Islamic Holy War, a pro-Iranian group, had said it was responsible for the attacks on five installations in Kuwait, including the American and French Embassies.

He said: "We're conducting an investigation, both on the scene and in terms of intelligence collation, to see how this event relates to earlier bombings in the Middle East."

The pro-Iranian group has said it was responsible for the bombing of the American Embassy in Beirut last April and is believed to have been involved in bombings of American, French and Israeli military installations in Lebanon in the last two months. President Reagan vowed that the culprits would be punished for the attack on Oct. 23 that killed 240 Marines, but only French and Israeli planes actually made retaliatory raids. The United States bombed Syrian positions in Lebanon eight days ago in retaliation for an attack on United States Navy reconnaissance planes.

'Back to Where We Were'

Because of the French and Israeli attacks on the pro-Iranian positions in Lebanon, United States officials had in effect given up on the threat of retaliation, believing it no longer necessary.

But the senior official said that if it was determined that Iran or pro-Iranian groups were responsible for the attack in Kuwait, "then we're back to where we were and we'll have to look at retaliation, probably with the French."

Mr. Shultz learned of the latest attack as he was preparing to leave Rabat, Morocco, for Lisbon this morning. Aboard his United States Air Force plane en route here, he told reporters that the United States had recently bolstered the security of many of its embassies. But he said American missions were created to serve people and it was therefore difficult to turn them into fortresses.

He said that "it is an unfortunate fact of life that international terrorism is growing" and that it was being used by governments to achieve their goals.

"It isn't as though there is some little group of people that is dissatisfied with some kind of grievance, and they get access to Molotov cocktails and throw them somewhere," he said.

Now, he said, governments such as North Korea use terrorism for political ends. He cited the attack in Rangoon, Burma, in October that killed four visiting South Korean Cabinet members.

No Immediate Plans to Act

Aboard his plane, Mr. Shultz said there was "no thought of any retaliation," but later a senior official said Mr. Shultz had meant only today or tomorrow and that he was not pinning the United States down to not retaliating.

The attacks in Kuwait heightened the problems for the United States in the Middle East as officials tried to grapple with Arab criticism of the strengthened American relationship with Israel, a subject that Mr. Shultz has dealt with in both Morocco and Tunisia in the last three days.

Mr. Shultz said on the airplane that it was his impression that Israel would not use force to try to prevent the evacuation of Yasir Arafat, the Palestine Liberation Organization leader, from Tripoli, Lebanon, but at the same time would not sanction the evacuation because of Israel's opposition to the use of the United Nations flag on any vessel carrying Mr. Arafat and his followers.

The United States has been urging Israel not to interfere with the evacuation because Mr. Shultz thinks it will enhance prospects for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon.

In Lisbon, where he plans to sign an agreement Tuesday renewing American military base rights in the Azores

Mr. Shultz officially inaugurated a \$15 million American Embassy that has been in operation since July. The new embassy can be reached only by going up a hill, seems to have the latest in security devices and seems much less accessible than older embassy buildings.

Speaking to reporters after the ceremony, Mr. Shultz said of the attack in Kuwait: "I do want to say that this is, again, a tragic and deplorable act which only emphasizes that peace has many enemies and peace must have defenders."

"The United States is a defender of peace and we deplore this violence, which in this case has taken Kuwaiti lives instead of American lives."

Mr. Shultz had extensive talks today with Foreign Minister Jaime Gama, Defense Minister Carlos Mota Pinto and President António Ramalho Eanes.

They discussed at length the problems in southern Africa, where Portugal has long been involved because of its former colonies, as well as NATO, Portuguese-American relations and Portugal's economic problems.

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